

Pope and the 'Painted Scene'

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In the years between 1711 and 1713 Alexander Pope was actively engaged in learning the art of painting. As can be seen from his early letters, he had already been a practitioner for some years, and by June 1713 he had begun to take lessons from his friend, the fashionable portrait-painter Charles Jervas. During 1712 and the early part of 1713 he was also busy revising the poem *Windsor Forest*, and preparing it for the press.¹ In the winter of 1712-13 he wrote to his friend, John Caryll: 'I am endeavouring to raise up around me a painted scene of woods and forests in verdure and beauty, trees springing, fields flowering, Nature laughing.'² Earlier in the letter he had quoted a number of 'beautiful winter-pieces of the poets', and if his own activities are intended as a contrast to these, it seems likely, as commentators have surmised, that in writing of his attempts to raise a 'painted scene' Pope refers to these revisions. If so, then Pope's conception of *Windsor Forest* as a 'painted scene' raises several interesting possibilities.

Modern critical readings of *Windsor Forest* have effectively disproved the old critical assumption, fostered by remarks of Pope himself, that the poem falls into two unrelated halves at line 290.³ Earl Wasserman's essay, particularly, demonstrates how well the poem can be read as a closely integrated expression of the doctrine of *concordia discors* as the desirable universal norm, a norm to which the benefits of the Peace of Utrecht are seen to conform. Wasserman writes (p. 110):

Coherently dominant though the political theme is throughout, it would be quite wrong to read the poem as a mere configuration of allegorical equivalents for the Peace of Utrecht and the political situations surrounding

- 1 All quotations from *The Twickenham Edition of the Poems of Alexander Pope*, Vol. I, *Pastoral Poetry and An Essay on Criticism*, ed. E. Audra and Aubrey Williams (1961). Further citation of this edition is incorporated in the text as *TE*, followed by volume and page number.
- 2 *The Correspondence of Alexander Pope*, ed. George Sherburn, 5 vols. (1956) I, p. 168: Pope to Caryll, 21 December 1712. Further citations appear in the text as *Corresp.* followed by volume and page number.
- 3 See Maynard Mack, 'On Reading Pope', *College English*, VII (1945-6), 263-73; Audra and Williams, *TE* I, pp. 131-44; Earl R. Wasserman, *The Subtler Language: Critical Readings of Neo-Classical and Romantic Poems* (1959), pp. 101-68.

it. Pope's tightly integrated world-view taught that 'the first Almighty Cause / Acts not by partial, but by gen'ral laws' (*Essay on Man*, i. 145-6).

However, while it may be true that Pope had a 'tightly integrated world-view' in 1730-32, the period of composition of his *Essay on Man*, one may question this as evidence that he had it at least twenty years before, in the period 1712-13, when he was putting the finishing touches to *Windsor Forest*. It is much more likely that any such world-view was being formed at this time, through the acquisition of knowledge and ideas by the twenty-four-year-old poet.

The idea of *concordia discors* may, for example, be embodied in the opening landscape of *Windsor Forest*:

Here Hills and Vales, the Woodland and the Plain,
Here Earth and Water seem to strive again,
Not *Chaos*-like together crush'd and bruis'd,
But as the World, harmoniously confus'd.
(ll. 11-14)

Pope *may* have arrived at this image and concept by a process of philosophical reading, but he would certainly have found it already expressed as a concept of the visual arts, landscape-painting specifically, in Bainbrigg Buckeridge's translation (1706) of Roger de Piles's *The Art of Painting*:

If painting be a sort of creation, 'tis more sensibly so in Landscips than in any other kind of Pictures. We see there Nature rising out of her Chaos, the Elements separated, the Earth adorn'd with her various productions, and the Heavens with their stars.

That Pope knew of Buckeridge's work is evident from the use he had already made of some of its critical precepts in his *Essay on Criticism*, and it is very likely that it, or a similar painting-manual, is the immediate source of the idea. In philosophical terms Pope's image of an ordered world is an expression of *concordia discors*; but equally, in painting terms as expressed by Roger de Piles, it is an harmonious landscape-painting.

Pope goes on in the poem to describe the landscape in more detail:

Here waving Groves a checquer'd Scene display,
And part admit and part exclude the Day . . .
There, interspers'd in Lawns and opening Glades,
Thin Trees arise that shun each others Shades.

Here in full Light the russet Plains extend;
 There wrapt in Clouds the blueish Hills ascend.
 (ll. 17-18, 21-24)

In the critical terms which Pope was later to apply to Homer's 'Shield of Achilles' in his translation of the *Iliad* (TE VIII, pp. 358-70) these lines fulfil the requirements laid down for the verbal equivalent of a painting — horizontal and vertical perspective are indicated, and appropriate colour is supplied.⁴ Jean Hagstrum considers that 'the composition is not developed into the later "picturesque" of foreground, middleground, and background';⁵ but this is surely to undervalue the visuality of the details: the sharp visual perception of the dappling of light and shade of a 'checquer'd Scene' and the 'thin' trees, implies that they are at close hand and hence in a foreground; the image closes with 'blueish Hills' that are 'wrapt in Clouds', both attributes indicative of far distance, and thus a background is provided; between these two, in Pope's lines, the 'russet Plains extend', appropriate for a middleground. Pope's deployment of detail in these lines, his specification of colour, is sufficiently precise for the image to be transferred to canvas without re-interpretation.

Certainly, if Pope held a 'tightly integrated world-view', and if it were consciously expressed as the overall meaning of *Windsor Forest*, one would expect him to hold the poem more highly in opinion, but the available evidence is against this. As well as the remarks about the 'painted scene' already quoted, he made a perhaps more considered assessment of the poem's value in his summarizing *Epistle to Dr. Arbuthnot* of 1734:

Soft were my Numbers, who could take Offence
 While pure Description held the place of Sense?
 Like gentle *Fanny's* was my flow'ry Theme,
 A painted Mistress, or a purling Stream.
 (ll. 147-50)

In a note which he added to these lines in 1735, Pope made himself even more clear:

The catalogue [of illustrious patrons] might be yet more illustrious, had he [Pope] not confined it to that time when he writ the *Pastorals* and *Windsor Forest*, on which he passes a sort of Censure in the lines following:
 While pure Description held the place of Sense etc.

- 4 For further comment on the colour of these lines, and on Pope's 'palette' generally, see Norman Ault, *New Light on Pope* (1949), pp. 88-9.
- 5 Jean Hagstrum, *The Sister Arts* (1958), p. 215.

It would be naive to take these statements at their face value, for there can be little doubt that the poem is more than 'pure Description', and is concerned with far wider issues than 'a purling Stream'. But there can also be little doubt that Pope held that 'painting' and 'description' form no inconsiderable part of the purpose of *Windsor Forest*, and that it is in these terms, among others, that he himself 'read' the poem.

In addition to ordered description, a more comprehensive way for an early eighteenth-century poet who was also interested in painting to combine the two arts was by making use of the 'advice-to-a-painter' device to account for his descriptions. As a means of describing the charms of the beloved it had already been used in Ben Jonson's *Eupheme*, having its classical origins in the *Anacreontea*. As a device for dealing with public figures and public events, either in panegyric or satire, it seems first to have been used in 1665 by Edmund Waller, with his *Instructions to a Painter*, a panegyric on James, Duke of York, and modelled directly on an Italian poem translated into English by Thomas Higgins in 1658. Waller's poem sparked off many imitations⁶ and of the sixty-odd poems in the genre known to have been in existence, many of them in print, by 1709, forty-eight were devoted to politics.⁷ The latest, in 1709, was Richard Blackmore's 'Instructions to Van der Bank', a panegyric on the Duke of Marlborough ridiculed, as was the genre itself, by Richard Steele in *Tatler* No. 3. That Pope both knew and used the genre is certain, for at least two 'advice-to-a-painter' poems, Thomas Otway's *Windsor Castle* (1685) and Charles Hopkins's *Whitehall* (1698) have provided sources for some of his borrowings in *Windsor Forest*.⁸

In 'advice-to-a-painter' poems extant before *Windsor Forest*, the device is used on several levels of sophistication. Sometimes the poem commences with a bold and curt injunction to begin work: 'Painter, once more thy pencil reassume' is the line used by several poets; others merely vary the verb — draw, paint, limn, shew. This type of line, either at the beginning or middle of a poem, is often the only indication that the poet is using the device. The 'instructed' painter is usually anonymous, but even when named — Dahl, Verrio, Vanderbank — the reference is topical only, and little

6 See G. de F. Lord (ed.), *Poems on Affairs of State*, 4 vols. (1963), I, pp. 20-21, for examples of the genre and a brief account of its early history.

7 See Mary T. Osborne, *Advice-to-a-Painter Poems 1633-1856: An Annotated Finding List* (1949), for full details.

8 See, e.g., *TE* I, pp. 133, 177n, 178n, 187n, 188n.

attempt is made to develop it. A more sophisticated use is found in Otway's *Windsor Castle*, where the contemporary painter Antonio Verrio is called in to *assist* the poet, and the Muse of Poetry is asked to

Call all thy sisters of the Sacred Hill,
And by the Painter's pencil guide my Quill.
(ll. 346-7)

A little later in Otway's poem, poet and painter are found working together, practitioners of the 'sister arts':

Thus far the Painter's hand did guide the Muse,
Now let her lead, nor will he sure refuse.
Two kindred arts they are, so near ally'd,
They oft have by each other been supply'd.
(ll. 414-17)

One thing remains common to all 'advice-to-a-painter' poems, however — each involves two 'actors' — there is a poet who instructs or advises, and a putative painter who is so instructed or advised. This basic structure is found also in *Windsor Forest*, where the *persona* Alexander Pope 'instructs' the Great Man and architect of the Peace of Utrecht, George Granville, Lord Lansdowne, who is also Pope's patron and an amateur poet himself.

This relationship is a more complex one than that which normally exists in an 'advice-to-a-painter' poem, however. In such poems the instructed painter is either a convenient, almost anonymous lay-figure who can be bluntly ordered to draw, paint etc.; or, as in Otway's *Windsor Castle* where Antonio Verrio is styled 'Great Man', is considered as an equal working in a similar medium. Otway's 'instructions' to Verrio are therefore the temperate advice of one colleague to another. Pope's relationship to Granville, however, is that of an inferior to a superior: Granville is Pope's patron, a public figure and, as is delicately implied, Pope's superior as a poet. In a relationship such as this, in a poem part of whose intention is to panegyricize Granville, there can be no curt injunction to begin work, no advice from equal to equal. One must proceed, as Pope does, by indirection, by flattery and suggestion:

But hark! the Groves rejoice, the Forest rings!
Are these reviv'd? or is it *Granville* sings?
'Tis yours, my Lord, to bless our soft Retreats,
And call the Muses to their ancient Seats,
To paint anew the flow'ry Sylvan Scenes.

To sing those Honours you deserve to wear,
And add new lustre to her Silver *Star*.

Oh wou'dst thou sing what Heroes *Windsor* bore.
(ll. 281-5, 289-90, 299)

Pope also advances the device by casting both himself and Granville as poet-painters working in the tradition of *ut pictura poesis* theory; it is Granville who will 'paint anew the flow'ry Sylvan Scenes' (l. 285) and 'draw Monarchs chain'd, and *Cressi's* glorious Field' (l. 305) in order to 'bring the Scenes of opening Fate to Light' (l. 426), while Pope's own 'humble Muse . . . / Paints the green Forests and the flow'ry Plains' (ll. 427-8).

In seeing both himself and Granville as painters, Pope is being more than metaphoric in his use of the word 'paint'. Pope uses the word 'paint' or its derivatives forty-one times in his original verse.⁹ Of these, thirty-five have for their primary meaning 'visual depiction' or 'visual colouring' — their contexts require this reading for intelligibility. Of the remaining six, four are concerned with character traits and states of feeling,¹⁰ where the primary meaning may be 'describe(s)'; the two remaining instances are these in *Windsor Forest*. Here too they might be glossed as 'describe(s)' but, if so, they would be the only times that Pope applied the word 'paint(s)' metaphorically to external and potentially visual objects that are given in the verse in visual terms — 'flow'ry Sylvan Scenes', 'green Forests and the flow'ry Plains'. Since 'paint' and 'draw' exist in specifically visual contexts at other places in the poem (e.g., ll. 38, 118, 305) there seems little doubt that Pope acknowledges a reciprocal relationship between poetry and painting, and that in *Windsor Forest* 'images reflect from Art to Art' (*Ep. to Mr. Jervas*, 1. 20). Adopting and adapting the traditional 'advice-to-a-painter' device, Pope gives life to and extracts significance from an almost lifeless convention. By relating himself to Granville as painter to painter he can acknowledge his indebtedness to his patron, offer public praise, and at the same time make use of his own interests in painting and the creation of panegyric descriptive verse. That Pope did view his relationship this way his letter of 10 January 1713 to Granville, thanking him for accepting the dedication of *Windsor Forest* makes clear (*Corresp.* I, 172):

I thank you for having given my poem *Windsor Forest* its greatest ornament,

9 Count taken from Abbott, *A Concordance to the Works of Alexander Pope*.
10 *Eloisa*, 336; *Dunciad* IV, 535; *Epilogue to Sat.* II, 8; *Moral Essays*, II, 119.

that of bearing your name in the front of it. 'Tis one thing when a person of true merit permits us to have the honour of drawing him as like as we can; and another, when we make a fine thing at random, and persuade the next vain creature we can find that 'tis his own likeness . . . I am so vain as to think I have shown you a favour . . . and you cannot but make me some return . . . : This I beg may be the free correction of these verses . . . I am in the circumstance of an ordinary painter drawing Sir Godfrey Kneller, who with a few touches of his own could make the piece very valuable . . .

It was a commonplace of seventeenth- and early eighteenth-century art theory that the only really master painter was the history-painter. It was also commonly held that there was a reasonably defined hierarchy of subject-matter by which one could rank painters. The French critic, Félibien, writing in 1669, sets out the typically accepted order.¹¹ The lowest ranking painter was the painter of still-life, then came the painter of landscapes; thence one proceeds, through animal-painters and painters of portraits, to the *grand peintre*: imitating God, whose most perfect work is man, he paints groups of human figures, choosing subjects from history and fable. 'He must,' writes Félibien, 'like the historians, represent great events, or, like the poets, subjects that will please; and, mounting still higher, be skilled to conceal under the veil of fable the virtues of great men, and the most exalted mysteries.'

The qualities of character necessary for the most excellent painters could be found elaborated in the French theorist Charles Du Fresnoy's Latin poem *De Arte Graphica* and its accompanying commentary by Roger de Piles, available in English in John Dryden's influential translation of 1695. In his commentary de Piles writes:

There was a time when only they who were of noble blood were permitted to exercise this art; because it is to be presumed that all these ingredients of a good painter are not ordinarily found in men of vulgar birth . . . The qualities required are these following: a good judgement, that they may do nothing against verisimilitude; a docile mind, that they may profit by instructions and receive, without arrogance, the opinion of everyone, and principally of knowing men; a noble heart, that they may propose glory to themselves, and reputation rather than riches; a sublimity and reach of thought, to conceive readily, to produce beautiful ideas, and to work on their subjects nobly and after a lofty manner, wherein we may observe somewhat that is delicate, ingenious and uncommon.

De Piles then goes on to list further requirements, such as health,

11 André Félibien, *Conférences de l'Académie Royale de Peinture et de Sculpture* (1669). Cited in Rensselaer W. Lee, 'Ut Pictura Poesis: The Humanistic Theory of Painting', *The Art Bulletin*, XXII, 4 (1940), 197-269.

beauty, and an adequate fortune for the uninterrupted pursuit of the art. Certainly, with these requirements to be met, only the most gifted man was qualified to attempt the *grande peinture* of the history.

Essentially, it was the history-painter's task to paint on the large scale, to treat the most exalted subjects, the noblest sentiments, and allegories of universal significance. The portrait-painter appealed only to a limited audience — his subject and his subject's immediate circle; the history-painter appealed to a universal audience. This was Pope's conception of the role of the history-painter. In 1716 he wrote to his friend the portrait painter Charles Jervas (*Corresp.* 1, 377):

I long to see you a History Painter. You have already done enough for the private, do something for the public; and be not confined like the rest to draw only such silly stories as our own faces tell of us. The Ancients too expect you should do them right.

Whether or not Jervas had the qualities necessary for a history-painter, Pope certainly endows Granville with them in *Windsor Forest*. Félibien had said that the history-painter must 'represent great events or . . . subjects that will please', and Pope exhorts Granville:

'Tis yours, My Lord, to bless our soft Retreats
And call the Muses to their ancient Seats,
To Paint anew the flow'ry Sylvan Scenes,
To crown the Forests with Immortal Greens,
Make Windsor Hills in lofty Numbers rise,
And lift her Turrets nearer to the Skies;
To sing those Honours you deserve to wear,
And add new Lustre to her Silver *Star*.

(ll. 283-90)

But, Félibien adds, the history-painter must go further, and 'mounting still higher, be skilled to conceal under the veil of fable the virtues of great men, and the most exalted mysteries'. Pope applies this to Granville at the conclusion of *Windsor Forest* (ll. 423-4), where it is found that it is not for the 'unhallow'd Lays' of Pope to 'Touch the fair Fame of *Albion's* Golden Days'. Rather it is for the *blessed* (l. 283) lays of Granville:

The Thoughts of Gods let *Granville's* Verse recite,
And bring the Scenes of opening Fate to Light.

(ll. 425-6)

These prescriptions also accord with de Piles's requirements of 'a good judgement', 'a docile mind', and 'a sublimity and reach of thought'. De Piles's requirement of 'a noble heart' is found fulfilled in Granville when Pope speaks of 'noble *Surrey* . . . the *Granville* of a former Age' (ll. 291-2).

Through the elevation of Granville to the status of history-painter, Pope is able to express the proper relationship which exists between an inferior painter and a superior painter. But if this relationship is to be maintained it follows that Pope, in his role of painter, must debar himself from attempting history-painting. From this it follows that in the parts of *Windsor Forest* he assigns overtly to himself he can attempt only landscape, genre, portraiture i.e. the lower modes in the traditional hierarchy of painting. These are, as Pope had pointed out to Jervas, private expressions, history-paintings are the public expressions. Consequently there is in *Windsor Forest* a separation of that 'Forest' which Pope in his own person writes about, and that 'Forest' seen as an allegory, a microcosm of the Universe, which is assigned to Granville. Pope's clear differentiation is implicit in the concluding lines of the poem. As important as this, however, is that by making use of the 'advice-to-a-painter' device to honour Granville, Pope, as the author of *Windsor Forest*, is also able to attempt the *grande peinture* himself, while still preserving his pretensions to modesty and humility. In the guise of 'instructing', Pope himself creates the allegorical histories which testify to the benefits of the Peace of Utrecht.

After a traditional invocation to the Muses and an acknowledgement to his patron Granville, Pope opens *Windsor Forest* with a picture of an ideal landscape, and introduces directly the idea of *ut pictura poesis* and the pictorial capabilities of poetry. In his reference to *Paradise Lost* Pope claims that the 'Groves of Eden . . . / live in Description, and look green in Song', and he can scarcely be maintaining that though the groves have physically vanished, we can still know what they looked like since Milton has left us a topographical description of them! He is holding that the groves *exist* in Milton's verse, that they are there created or at least re-created, and that it is in terms of Addison's theory of the Imagination, the ability of poetry to evoke visual responses, that they 'live', and 'look green'. By a similar process of recreation in verse, Pope (in his role of landscape-painter), aims to preserve for ever the visual beauty of Windsor Forest. Putting forward the Forest as another Eden allows the suggestion to arise that Windsor Forest is a new Eden, and hence that it is a microcosm of the

unfallen world. Pope the landscape-painter checks this 'universalizing' tendency, however, by carefully delimiting the points of correspondence to one — visual beauty ('*These . . . / Like them [Eden's groves] in Beauty*' — ll. 9-10); the resonances set up by the Windsor Forest/Eden comparison remain, at this point in the poem, muted and undeveloped.

Of the harmonious landscape of lines 11-28 Professor Wasserman writes:

The complaints of critics like William Lisle Bowles that the description of the Forest forms no picture arise from irrelevant standards, which ask that the poem accomplish something it never intends. The description is not scenic, but thematic; we are not to see things, but to realise the principle of *concordia discors* . . . Consequently the entire description is organised around the natural harmonizing of contraries: here are both hills and vales, woods and plains, earth and water; here trees partly admit and partly exclude the light. (p. 111)

But this is to ignore the fact that, as has already been discussed, in painting terms, the *scena* is highly visual in content, and its spatial organization insistent on depth and height. There is little of the kind of description looked for by Bowles, chiefly because Pope disapproved of long description. In an early letter to Cromwell he wrote (*Corresp.* I, 104):

You can't but have remarked what a journey Lucan [Book IX] here makes Cato take for the sake of his fine descriptions . . . The Winter's effects on the Sea, it seems, were more to be dreaded than all the Serpents, Whirlwinds, Sands, etc. by land, which immediately after he points out in his speech to the soldiers.

His opinion years later was still the same, as recorded by Joseph Spence, in 1735:

'Tis a great fault in descriptive poetry to describe everything. That is one fault in Thomson's *Seasons*. The good ancients (but when I named them I meant Virgil) have no long descriptions, commonly not above ten lines, and scarcely ever thirty. (*Observations*, No. 384)

What Pope is doing in these lines is drawing on real perceptions of Windsor Forest, and unifying them, through juxtaposition of mass and colour, and through a sense of spatial depth implied by 'here' and 'there', into an organized landscape, conceived in visual terms, highly reminiscent of the paintings of Claude Lorrain. It is precisely because Claude paintings, with their amphitheatrical scenic structure and their regression to blueish hills 'wrapt in Clouds',

seemed to embody the 'Order in Variety' Pope is attempting to display, that the paintings were so admired in early eighteenth-century England, and later gave rise to the creation of Claudian landscape-gardens such as that at Stourhead, or the one Pope and William Kent designed for General Dormer at Rousham. In the ideal landscape of Windsor Forest presented, it is not, as Professor Wasserman puts it, 'that we are not to see things, but to realise the principle of *concordia discors*'; rather, we can only recognize the principle *after* we have perceived a visual embodiment of it.

The natural *scena* of lines 11-28 is a pictorial emblem of this abstract concept. To 'round out' the truth which this ordered scene expresses, Pope goes on to people it (ll. 33-42) with classical deities and abstractions which testify to abundance—Pan, Pomona, Flora, Rich Industry, etc. Such icons were familiar and readily accessible in the numerous dictionaries of iconography current at the time; indeed, one of the most popular throughout Europe in the seventeenth century, Cesare Ripa's *Iconologia*, had its first English edition in 1709, three years before Pope began his *Windsor Forest* revisions.

Audra and Williams (*TE I*, p. 137) gloss this passage thus: 'Pan and Pomona are here, not as deities of a creed outworn, but as they are exemplified in their blessings, the flocks and the fruits.' One can hardly overlook, however, the literal meaning of 'See *Pan* with Flocks, with Fruits *Pomona* crown'd', and to an audience familiar with Baroque iconography such as Ripa's, it would be impossible not to visualize the deities as personalities with their attendant attributes—Pan surrounded by sheep, Flora strewing the ground with flowers, etc. Ceres is not present as a personification, but her gifts of corn and wheat are seen as 'waving'. The same is true of the abstractions, personified in the Baroque manner as active agents which *enact* their meaning: Rich Industry 'smiles', Peace and Plenty 'tell'. Personification and humanization of abstract concepts can scarcely go much farther than this.

In treating this passage as I have I am aware that it is traditional to point to the resemblance it bears to Virgil's *Georgics*, II, ll. 136-76, but I merely remark that, however close the thought may be, Pope's treatment of his material, as a reading of Virgil would show, is completely different. Indeed, in one significant detail the thought is different—Virgil's praise of his country leads up to an apostrophe of 'most royal Caesar'; in Pope's picture of an ideal landscape the Monarch in person is significantly absent. Peace and

Plenty only *tell* that 'a STUART reigns'; for it would be inappropriate and a breach of the decorum imposed by Pope's role of landscape-painter that the Monarch should appear in such a painting.

However much of *Windsor Forest* may be concerned with the universal principle of *concordia discors*, it is still Pope's primary and stated intention to testify to the benefits of the Peace of Utrecht. This he proceeds to do by a series of parallels and contrasts, composed of temporal progressions through history (some of them cyclical, as an ideal Present and an ideal Past are unified), which make their ethical points through emblematic illustrative pictorialism. In keeping with his role as a 'private' painter Pope uses the modes of landscape, genre and portraiture.

In the lines (ll. 43-92) immediately following this *scena* of natural harmony, the ethical point of the barbarities of William I (and by implication of William III) is made by means of a contrasted landscape of ruins, reminiscent of the style of Salvator Rosa, a popular contrast (at the time) to the idealizations of Claude Lorraine. It is a landscape of desolation, whose desolation can only be comprehended by visual means — it *looks* desolate. After contemplating, again in visual terms, the deaths of William I and his two sons, Pope moves the time of his 'action' back to the present by sketching in (ll. 85-90) a process of amelioration, which culminates in the scene of the present Forest:

Fair Liberty, Britannia's Goddess, rears
Her chearful Head, and leads the golden Years.
(ll. 91-92)

By personifying the concept of 'Liberty' as an icon in the Ripa manner, Pope gives it a quality of real existence, almost as a monumental figure of sculpture, so that its substantiality presents a stronger testimony of the truth than the expression of the abstract truth itself would do. It also adumbrates, as the similarly attesting existence of Peace and Plenty (l. 42) had adumbrated, the figure of Great Anna, the Stuart monarch in whose reign the 'golden years' have come into being.

It has become standard practice in criticisms of *Windsor Forest*, especially since Norman Ault's perceptive study of Pope's colour-sense, to comment on the pictorialism, the lavish use of colour, which Pope appears to indulge himself in from time to time. Reuben Brower¹² speaks of 'the glowing Breughellesque embroidery of the

12 Reuben F. Brower, *Alexander Pope: The Poetry of Allusion* (1959), p. 53. Further citation is incorporated in the text.

dying pheasant' and notes that Pope 'improved' his manuscript version 'The silver Eel in slimy Volumes' to 'the silver Eel in shining Volumes'. In doing so, Brower is drawing attention to another highly influential pictorial art form of Pope's day — the Dutch still-lives and genre-paintings that were coming into England in increasing numbers.

The Dutch genre-picture, as Max Friedländer defines it, is one that 'includes the rendering of everyday occurrences originating in customs, work, family life, festive occasions'.¹³ It differs from history-painting, he goes on, because 'History-painting concerns itself with that which has happened once and at a given place; *genre* painting with that which every day happens here.' It is this same quality of 'it every day happens here', the continuous present, which Pope seeks to establish in the peaceful hunting-scenes of lines 93-158. He is also well aware, in *Windsor Forest*, that Man is naturally an aggressive animal, and that this aggression, which was displayed by William III as much as by William I, can never be wholly eradicated. What he hopes to do then, is to 'contain it' within the bounds of an acceptable form of 'hunting', so that, as it is put later in the poem, 'The shady Empire shall retain no Trace / Of War or Blood, but in the Sylvan Chace' (ll. 371-2). In his serial and pictorial treatment of the hunting-scenes Pope goes further, however, finding in the recurring seasonal pleasures of the hunt an image of cyclical regeneration which once again provides testimony from Nature itself of the benefits of the Peace of Utrecht.

The first pair of hunting-scenes is set in Autumn. The visuality in the description of the partridge-hunt (ll. 97-110) is not particularly strong, but it is sufficient as it stands to qualify for the kind of criticism that Pope gave to the 'picturesque' effects of Tickell and Philips, and Jonathon Richardson and others gave to Milton. A set of variant lines in all editions from 1736 to 1751 was more consciously 'painterly' (*TE* I, 159n):

When yellow autumn summer's heat succeeds,
And into wine the purple harvest bleeds,
The partridge feeding in the new-shorn fields,
Both morning sports and ev'ning pleasures yields.

But Pope, as a painter, is both prudent and economical of effect. One of the standard objections, in his day, to the equation of poetry with painting, was that poetry was essentially a temporal art,

13 Max Friedländer, *On Art and Connoisseurship* (1942), pp. 98, 109.

painting a spatial one. As his friend the critic Jonathon Richardson (*Essay on the Theory of Painting*, p. 8) put it, 'every picture is a representation of one single point in time; this then must be chosen; and that in the story that is the most advantageous must be it.' Theoreticians such as the Frenchman Le Brun would allow a certain amount of preparation for this 'advantageous' moment. A painter is not like a historian, said Le Brun, 'who by a succession of words represents a progressive action; but since he may depict an event as taking place only in a single moment of time, it is sometimes necessary for him to join together many incidents in order that people may understand the subject which he treats'.¹⁴ For Pope the 'most advantageous' moment is the moment just before the final capture of the partridges, the moment of suspended animation when

Hov'ring o'er 'em sweeps the swelling Net.
(l. 104)

It is only when the net is imagined visually that the parallel moral point which Pope makes in his following comparison of the captured town is driven home; for, to the victims, the net as it swells and hovers is the exact visual equivalent of the waving flag of the victors as

. . . high in Air Britannia's Standard flies.
(l. 110)

Pope makes his moral point emblematically, by the use of two complementary iconographs.

Much of Pope's talent for colouring is expended in the Autumn sequence on the still life *cum* animal painting of the dying pheasant, and in the Spring sequence on the catalogue of the fishes. The luxuriance of colour in these two passages, and their resemblance to those highly finished Dutch still lifes of fruit, fish and game are obvious. In the lines on the pheasant (ll. 111-18) which the reader is invited to 'see' in more than metaphoric terms, the emphasis is on the visual appearance of the bird. It is difficult to agree with Brower (p. 54) that the pheasant is 'viewed as a dying hero', recalling Virgil's dying ox (*Georgics*, III, 515-25) and Virgil's rhetorical '*quid labor aut benefacta iuvant?*' There is little in Pope's 'glossie, varying Dyes' to correspond in any meaningful way with Virgil's '*labor aut benefacta*'. What does exist, perhaps, to some extent, is something.

14 Quoted in Lee, *op. cit.*, p. 256.

of the concept inherent in the Dutch *Vanitas* still life — the bowl of gleaming fruit in which one apple has rotted, the pile of glistening fish on one of which rests an intruding fly. In the icon of the pheasant Pope celebrates the beauty of the season of Autumn — a season of life, though a life overshadowed by death. It is alive just as the pheasant is still alive ('Flutters', 'panting') and, like the pheasant, it is colourful and beautiful in its dying.

It is only in the lifeless season of Winter — which Pope treats in a typical winter-piece of the kind he praised in Philips and others — with its negative visuals of *naked* groves, *leafless* trees, *flooded* glades (ll. 124-8) that death is fully present. Here the victim actually dies at the hunter's hand as lapwings 'feel the sudden Death' and 'mounting Larks . . . fall, and leave their little lives in Air' (ll. 132-4). With the return of Spring (ll. 135-46) and the promise of renewed vitality, life quickens and colours brighten. The joy of Spring and renewed life are celebrated emblematically in the highly visual catalogue of the fishes — and there is no hint of death. The hunter, now a 'patient fisher', can only 'hope' that there may be a catch at the end of his 'bending reed'.

With the onset of Summer (ll. 148-58) the regeneration-cycle reaches its apogee. In these lines, ostensibly on the stag-hunt, the visual concentration is entirely on the riders and their horses, images of vigorous life; the 'impatient courser' which 'pants in every vein', the cry 'See! the bold youth strain up the threatening Steep' (l. 155) demonstrate where, at this point, the interests of the poem tend — they lead to the modern Diana of the English stag-hunt, Queen Anne herself. In this emblematic image of Summer the ostensible subject, the stag, has no significant existence. It is dismissed in half a line ('Rowse the fleet hart', l. 150), for there can be no victims, no death, in the high Summer of the reign of Queen Anne,

Whose Care . . . protects the Sylvan Reign.
The Earth's fair Light, and Empress of the Main.
(ll. 163-4)

Inevitably the cyclical progress, this time a seasonal one, puts forth the emblematic icon Anne-Diana, as the proof of the truth of the poem — the benefits arising from the Peace of Utrecht.

Though the description of the Man of Retirement (ll. 237-58) is very much a Theophrastian 'character', it also fulfills many requirements of the early eighteenth-century painted portrait. Jonathan Richardson, in his *Essay*, speaking about portrait-

painting, wrote:

'Tis not enough to make a tame, insipid resemblance of the features, so that everybody shall know who the picture was intended for . . . A portrait-painter must understand Mankind, and enter into their characters and express their minds, as well as their faces. (p. 24)

The portrait is a composite, a representative portrait of the man of study and retirement, and it is partly a portrait of the poet Pope himself as he appears in *Windsor Forest*. It is he 'Whom Nature charms, and whom the Muse inspires' (l. 238), he who cries to the Muses 'Bear me, oh bear me to sequester'd Scenes' (l. 261). Consequently it seems that Granville is to be seen as the 'Happy man' of public life:

Happy the Man whom this bright Court approves,
His Sovereign favours, and his Country loves.
(ll. 235-6)

It is Granville who was favoured by the Sovereign with a peerage, and loved by his country for the part he played, as a Minister, in securing the Peace of Utrecht. The whole tenor of the argument in *Windsor Forest* is to point to the Court and the Sovereign as the source of all excellence and the greatest happiness. This Pope acknowledges in this couplet, but again, in keeping with the discipline and structure he has imposed on himself and the poem, he restricts himself to the happiness ('happy next him' l. 237) of the 'private' aspects of the *Windsor Forest* he allows himself to treat. The 'Man of Retirement' becomes an emblem of the peace and serenity of the Forest itself.

As a portrait-painter then, Pope satisfies Richardson's requirement that 'a portrait-painter must understand Mankind, and enter into their character'; but he goes further, obeying Du Fresnoy's precept (No. XXIII) that in a good portrait

The marks or ensigns of virtues contribute not little, by their nobleness, to the ornament of the figures. Such for example are the decorations belonging to the liberal arts, to war, or sacrifices.

De Piles, in his commentary, glosses these 'marks or ensigns of virtues' as those emblems 'of the sciences and arts. The Italians call a man a *virtuoso* who loves the noble arts and is a critic in them.' Pope provides intimations of these 'marks or ensigns' with allusions to the 'Chymic Art' (l. 245) and the apparatus of distillation, the telescope with 'marks the Course of rolling Orbs on high' (l. 245),

the 'figur'd Worlds' and a terrestrial globe, and the volumes and manuscripts containing 'ancient Writ' (l. 247). That the Forest nurtures the 'Man of Retirement' physically, spiritually and intellectually, is proof that there is Peace. To this peace the portrait of the 'Happy Man' testifies, becoming in the process an iconograph signifying Peace itself.

Thus far in *Windsor Forest* Pope, in his *persona* of 'humble' painter, has demonstrated and celebrated the effects of the Peace of Utrecht from a contemplation of the natural world around him. He has contemplated it from the point of view of its landscape, its daily life and the cycle of seasonal change, the life of a representative inhabitant. As a poet engaged in *ut pictura poesis* painting he has risen from landscape and still life through genre-painting to portraiture. What remains is a consideration of the great world and history-painting, things for which the poet-*persona* is 'unambitious' (l. 427). The '*beatus ille*' of private life now gracefully retires, as he invokes the aid of the history-painter Granville, the Happy Man of public life, who alone is suited to carry on and elaborate the benefits of the Peace of Utrecht to the world outside the Forest, a world which ultimately merges with the Universe.

The retirement and the invocation go hand-in-hand. Pope cries to the Muses:

Bear me, oh bear me to sequester'd Scenes,
 The Bow'ry Mazes and surrounding Greens;
 To *Thames's* Banks which fragrant breezes fill,
 Or where ye Muses sport on *Cooper's Hill*.
 (ll. 261-4)

A contemplation of the 'consecrated Walks' leads to a contemplation of the 'God-like Poets' (l. 270) of former times who have made these groves 'Venerable' in their verse, and this leads naturally to the rhetorical question

Are these reviv'd? or is it *Granville* sings?
 (l. 282)

Granville, it is declared, will 'paint anew the flow'ry Sylvan Scenes' (l. 285), not from the same point of view as the humble Pope had already done, but as one who, standing at the head of a historical line of 'God-like poets', will make these scenes 'Venerable' and 'Immortal' (l. 286). He will go further, and in 'lofty Numbers' (l. 287) dignify and elevate Windsor Castle and its 'Honours', the

Monarch and her benefactions, almost to Heaven itself (ll. 288-90). Using the 'advice-to-a-painter' device Pope is now able, under the guise of giving advice and merely making suggestions to Granville, to preserve his pretensions to modesty while at the same time going on to attempt his own *grande peinture*, his own history paintings, developing themes which he was previously able only to hint at in the grand manner, and with universal application.

He begins quietly (ll. 299-310) by suggesting that Granville 'draw' the historical events of the reign of Edward III when France was made subject to England, just as she was again subjected, or at least humbled, by the Treaty of Utrecht. Pope specifically suggests that Granville 'draw' the relevant paintings which Antonio Verrio had done in St George's Hall at Windsor Castle some thirty-odd years before. He took this suggestion from Otway's *Windsor Castle*, itself an 'advice-to-a-painter' poem, and a comparison of the two passages is of interest. Of the paintings Otway wrote:

Here may they see how good old *Edward* sate
 And did his Glorious Son's Arrival wait,
 When from the Fields of vanquish'd *France* he came,
 Follow'd by Spoils, and usher'd in by Fame.
 In Golden Chains he their Quell'd Monarch led.
 (*Windsor Castle*, ll. 359-63)

Pope writes:

Oh wou'dst thou . . .
 With *Edward's* Acts adorn the shining Page,
 Stretch his long Triumphs down thro' ev'ry Age,
 Draw Monarchs chain'd and *Cressi's* glorious Field,
 The Lillies blazing on the Regal Shield . . .
 Still in thy Song shou'd vanquish'd *France* appear,
 And bleed for ever under *Britain's* Spear.
 (ll. 299, 303-10)

If one agrees that Otway *describes* the Verrio paintings and their subject, then it can be argued that Pope rises above description, creating the paintings anew in his verse, for his heightened pictorialism and use of emblematic iconography are apparent.

For Otway 'vanquish'd *France*' is a geographical location from which the Black Prince 'came'. Pope elevates it to the status of a personified abstraction, an iconographic emblem in the Ripa manner, and places it in a tableau, moral in intent and pictorially conceived, where it will 'bleed forever under *Britain's* spear'. Pope's terms stress the present tense and the immediacy of the

'action' he is depicting — adorn, stretch, draw, blazing, appear, bleed; the facts and sentiments he wishes to emphasize — the triumph of Britain over France with its relevance to the Peace of Utrecht — are embodied in iconographs and pictorial emblems: 'Monarchs chain'd', '*Cressi's* field', 'Lillies', 'Regal Shield', 'vanquish'd *France*' bleeding under '*Britain's* spear'. By contrast Otway's terms stress the past tense of the 'action' — sate, did await, came, follow'd, usher'd, led; his facts and sentiments are embodied almost entirely in narrative, with 'Fame' as the only possible iconograph.

It is evident that Otway's interest in the Verrio paintings is really an interest in a past historical event of which Verrio's work is an *aide-memoire* for people ('Here may they see . . .') to recall past history. Pope is also interested in the past historical event and its relevance to contemporary events, but he is equally interested in the present depiction of that event in painting — the creation by Granville of an alternative set of paintings so that 'when *Verrio's* Colours fall' (l. 307), visual knowledge of the past historical action will be preserved in Granville's verse, in the same way that for Pope, visual knowledge of the groves of Eden still 'Live in Description and look green' (l. 8) in the verse of Milton.

The 'advice' to Granville continues: 'let softer Strains Ill-fated *Henry* mourn' (l. 311), 'Make sacred *Charles's* Tomb for ever known' (l. 319). But the recollection of this martyred Stuart monarch causes the potential energies — earlier generated by the poem in the circumscribed references 'Peace and Plenty tell, a STUART reigns', 'Fair *Liberty, Britannia's* Goddess' (ll. 42, 91) — to break out and become kinetic energies. The argument of the poem is impelled forward, and the rhetoric transcends rather than abandons the more obvious aspects of the 'instructions' device. Granville the 'instructed' painter is not abandoned, but the instructions, charged with energy, now assume the dominant role in the poem, as Pope does history-painting on the grand scale. The rhetoric swells out, with the couplet (ll. 327-8) containing the Royal fiat 'Let Discord cease!', into the poem's first overt image of 'great ANNA' as more than the temporal Stuart monarch Queen Anne — she is offered as a figure of Peace and Justice combined. From this point on the tableaux of *Windsor Forest* are carried out as history paintings where, in Félibien's words, the painter must 'represent great events, or . . . subjects that will please; and mounting still higher, be skilled to conceal under the veil of fable the virtues of great men, and the most exalted mysteries.'

With the triumphant realization that 'all was *Peace!*' (l. 328), the elements of natural plenty and natural harmony which the poem had earlier celebrated at the lesser, 'private' level, now coalesce into a formal, Baroque composition, the Tableau of the Rivers (ll. 329-54) executed partly as painting, partly as monumental sculpture. Its reminiscence of the Baroque River-fountains of Bernini is self-evident, and is an accepted commonplace of Pope criticism.

As Reuben Brower has observed, 'like the contemporary "world-makers" . . . who excited him so much, Pope sweeps on easily from here and now to the millenium' (p. 60). But Pope sweeps on in no uncontrolled way; his progression onward, and the expansion of his themes, follow closely the typical development and exposition of the themes of Baroque ceiling-paintings, familiar to him and his contemporaries in the work of Thornhill at Greenwich, Streeter in the Sheldonian Theatre at Oxford, and the paintings for Queen Anne which Antonio Verrio had recently completed in the Queen's Drawing Room at Hampton Court.

Among the characteristics of Baroque art which the critic Wylie Sypher, developing concepts of Heinrich Wölfflin, points out, are: an abundance of overstatement, kinetic energy of mass in motion and grand simplification. 'Baroque art,' he writes, 'has its own governing law of dynamics, a technique first of "closure", then expansion into space; without this sense of "closure" Baroque cannot achieve its illusion of distance, release and triumph.'¹⁵ Pope achieves this sense of 'closure' with the extended Tableau of the Rivers; the forces and interests generated by the poem are gathered together there, and the almost tangible mass of the total icon, its monumental balance and its emblematic imagery of fecundity and harmony under total benignant control, are sufficient evidence of the truth, the Peace and Plenty of a Stuart reign, that *Windsor Forest* seeks to demonstrate. But there then follows, through Father Thames's grandiose 'vision' of universal peace and harmony as a consequence of Stuart rule (ll. 355-422) the same kind of melodramatic expansion into cosmic space that Streeter, for instance, achieves (somewhat lamely) with the Sheldonian ceiling, where *putti* roll back an awning which is deemed to cover the ceiling and reveal, in limitless space, a vision of Truth dismissing Envy, Rapine and Ignorance.

15 Wylie Sypher, *Four Stages of Renaissance Style: Transformations in Art and Literature 1400-1700* (1956), pp. 180-88.

Pope concludes the 'vision' of Father Thames, and the poem, with an exhortation and apostrophe to Peace (ll. 407-22) which is once more conceived in painterly and iconographic terms. The 'action' here echoes Streeter's Sheldonian ceiling, though the iconography is traditional enough. Each personified abstraction is given its appropriate attributes — the weapons of Vengeance, the snakes of Envy, the wheel of Persecution. This conforms to another standard contemporary prescript of painting. As Richardson, writing in his *Essay* stated it:

In all these kind of pictures the painter should avoid too great a luxury of fancy and obscurity. The figures representing any Virtue, Vice or other quality, should have such insignia as are authorised by Antiquity and Custom; or if any be necessarily of his own invention, his meaning should be apparent. Painting is a sort of writing, it ought to be easily legible. (p. 75)

Pope's skilful use of Baroque iconography in this passage can be compared with a superficially similar passage in Otway's *Windsor Castle*. Otway envisages the establishment of temporal peace and order under James II. 'Instructing' the painter Verrio, he writes:

Set at long distance his contracted foes,
Shrinking from what they dare not now oppose;
Draw shame or mean despair in all their eyes,
And terror lest th' Avenging Hand should rise.
But where his smiles extend draw beauteous Peace,
The poor man's cheerful toils, the rich man's ease.

(ll. 549-54)

Both Pope and Otway use the same device for removing Vices from the earth: 'Set at long distance' (Otway); 'Exiled . . . to deepest Hell' (Pope). But Otway is writing of temporal possibilities only; his vision is not as cosmic, as apocalyptic, as that of Pope. In Otway's vision the vices — enmity, shame, envy, terror, despair — are controlled only because the men who embody them, James's 'Contracted Foes', are controlled by the fear of vengeance embodied in James himself. But, as has been observed (*TE* I, 144), in *Windsor Forest* Pope 'celebrates not only the destiny of a nation, but also that of a world'. Queen Anne has been transfigured into the abstractions of Justice and Peace themselves and the Vices there take on absolute values, becoming traditional Baroque iconographs. In the proper Baroque manner, which aims at an event rather than stasis, the description in Pope's lines is carried by the verb as much as by the adjective or attribute:— Discord dwells, Pride . . . Care . . . Ambition attend, Envy . . . shall feel, Vengeance

retires, Persecution mourns, Faction roars, Rebellion bites, gasping Furies thirst. To an audience as well tuned to iconography as Pope's, these lines would be almost overwhelmingly visual.

With the Royal *fiat* 'Let Discord cease' (l. 327), Pope had attributed to Queen Anne more than temporal power and sovereignty. The suggestion of the Divine *fiat* of the Biblical Creation is clearly implicit in her ability to create order out of chaos — 'She said, the World obey'd, and all was *Peace!*' (l. 328). Anne becomes elevated, apotheosized, to the semi-divinity of Peace itself; she is seen as a vice-regent of God, even an 'earthly' God herself, one whose thoughts Granville will 'recite' (l. 425). For the Peace imposed is a 'Sacred *Peace*' (l. 355), and it is one whose reign will dominate the world 'from Shore to Shore', bringing both Mercy and Justice 'Till Conquest cease, and Slav'ry be no more' (ll. 407-8). Queen Anne has been raised to the figure of Ruler of the Seas, Governor of the Earth, and to the figure of Divine Justice itself.

Apotheosized thus, Pope's visual analogue for the figure is Antonio Verrio's ceiling-painting, done about 1703, in the Queen's Drawing Room at Hampton Court.¹⁶ Here Verrio 'bursts through' the temporality and 'closure' represented by the room's ceiling architecture, revealing an Empyrean where Anne is seen in the Firmament, bearing the sword and scales of Justice and attended by two doves — the Dove of Peace and the Dove of the Holy Spirit. Attending her are all the Virtues and Graces, while Neptune and Britannia hold the crown of England above her head. In close attendance are Peace and Plenty, the 'Peace and Plenty that tell, a STUART reigns'.

16 See Earnest Law, *A History of Hampton Court: Orange and Guelph Times* (1891), p. 174, for a detailed description.